

## **Chase darkness with me**

The post needed to stand out and away from the same tired “Information Wanted” posters law enforcement has been distributing – and the media have been echoing – ever since they were searching for John Wilkes Booth in 1865. Always fact-heavy, leading with heights and weights and age ranges, the bulletproof native language of cops. “Just the facts” was not going to be effective. I needed to tell a story. I selected eleven screenshots from the video – all different angles of the Man in the Green Hoodie. And then I wrote the post in the killer's voice, speaking directly to the reader.

“This is the video where I punch a stranger – a stranger who later dies. It was taken 4:20 a.m. on Sunday, Feb.7 outside the 7-Eleven on State and Hubbard in River North, Chicago. I am the man in the green hooded jacket and white sneakers. (The man who died is in the blue shirt. He just went to the store for some chips.) If you know my name or anything about me – anything at all – please message me here or leave a comment. If you don't have any information, but have friends in Chicago, please share. His family desperately wants answers.”

The next part of the plan would be geotargeting – identifying the location where I wanted to share the photo of the suspect and delivering content directly targeted to the people in that location. Even if I had a million fans on my own personal page, I would never get the video in front of the people I needed to reach: the people from that neighborhood. The right people. That meant I had to break out my credit card. [...]

I was asked by Facebook if I wanted to “boost” the post. [...] Depending on how much I spent, I could target a certain number of people based on a certain set of characteristics. Under the audience section, I entered the location of the incident – 418 North State Street in Chicago – and drew a circle around it encompassing a two-mile radius. I kept the age range the boosted post would reach at eighteen to sixty-five plus. [...] For the budget, I entered \$100, a number I would soon realize was paltry. With a hundred bucks, I would reach 4,400 to 12,000 out of the 240,000 Facebook users who lived or worked in the area. If I added more money, I could reach more people. This is how Facebook has become a \$328 billion company.

With the photo, caption, and geotargeting parameters set, I pushed “publish”.

Billy Jensen, *Chase Darkness with Me*, 2019